

The Gospel According to Pixar sermon series

“The Incredibles”

[1 Corinthians 12:4-11](#)

My Grandson, Gabriel is a typical 6-year old boy. These days, he is very much into superhero videos and games. His toy boxes and coloring books are full of superhero characters, like the Power Rangers and City Heroes; and he especially loves the toys that can transform into cars. In his world of imagination, he is also one of the superheroes. With his supernatural powers, he joins them in fighting evil in the universe. His special power is becoming invisible and making supervillains frozen.

In the world of the Pixar movie, *The Incredibles*, which came out in 2004, we meet a family of superheroes - Mr. Incredible, Elastigirl, and their three children, Violet, and Dash, and Jack Jack. All of them except the youngest child have supernatural powers. With his super strength, Mr. Incredible can lift any object, no matter how heavy it is. Elastigirl can bend, stretch, and twist her body to any direction. Violet can become invisible and create a force-field for protection, while Dash can move at supersonic speed. What a super family with super cool capabilities!

Like Elastigirl, Mr. Incredible used to be one of the greatest and strongest superheroes in Metroville. He fought battles against evil villains everyday, even on the day of his wedding, saving people's lives at various crime scenes. With his great heroism, he inspired many to follow his example. But, it all changed when Mr. Incredible was sued by a person who did not want to be saved. Soon other superheroes were hit by a surge of lawsuits against them, filed by similarly disgruntled people they had saved. When the political outcries continued, the government forced all the superheroes to retire from their work of saving people's lives and live a life of anonymity as normal citizens through the Superheroes Relocation Program.

Now, known as Bob Parr, Mr. Incredible lives a mundane life in the suburbs working as an insurance claims specialist. Let's take a look at the first clip and find out how he is doing. [Show clip #1]

Elastigirl, now known as Helen Parr, has moved on from her days as a superhero fighting crime and is focused on raising their children. But, Bob is different. He still yearns for the good old days and hates the insurance business he is in now. He is unhappy and miserable at work, stuck in a tiny cubicle with a pushy boss. The Superhero Relocation Program is eating him alive.

However, Mr. Incredible is not the only one who is struggling. His two older children also struggle to live as normal kids. Dash, who can run super fast, wants to try out for sports, but his parents do not allow him to do so out of fear that their true identities may accidentally be revealed. Frustrated, the little boy often gets into trouble at school. On the other hand, Violet is extremely shy and feels invisible at school, struggling to fit in as a teen because of her supernatural powers. She hates the fact that she is different from others. She says, "I just want to be normal."

In this environment of repressing true identities and talents, as well as boring routines, Helen, as the devoted wife and mother, is able to work very hard to build a normal life for her family. However, Bob simply can-

not. He is a frustrated and depressed husband and father, who finds it too difficult to hide his true identity as a superhero and live as a normal person. A strong desire to help people and save their lives is in his DNA. He can't just ignore people who are stuck in danger. Eventually, Bob starts to sneak out at night with his former superhero friend, Frozone, who can freeze anything. Working together, they relive their former golden days, secretly saving people at various crime scenes. The moonlighting becomes an outlet for Bob's frustration and unhappiness with his life as a normal person.

One day, Mr. Incredible is very frustrated with his demanding boss and ends up throwing him through several walls. And the incident results in the termination of his job. That night, Mr. Incredible receives a mysterious invitation to a top-secret mission trip to a remote island. His mission is to destroy a robot that is trying to destroy a secret government facility. Without hesitation, he jumps at the opportunity to be a superhero again, but he keeps it from his wife. Because he is so out of shape from his years as a normal civilian, Mr. Incredible struggles to defeat the robot that seems to be invincible. He returns home rejuvenated from his successful secret mission trip. Let's take a look at the second clip and notice the changes in him. [Show clip #2]

Isn't it heartwarming to see Mr. Incredible happy again? And because he is happy, his wife is happy, and so are their children.

But, you can only live a double-life for so long. After Mr. Incredible goes out of town for another conference, Elastigirl, who has become suspicious of his out of town trips, investigates. By the time she discovers what's been truly going on with her husband, she finds out that he is in great danger. Soon, Elastigirl is leaving behind her three children to embark on a journey to the same remote island that Mr. Incredible was lured to and where her husband is now being held in captivity by Syndrome, an evil supervillain. But her older children, Violet and Dash, unexpectedly join her in the rescue mission by sneaking their way onto the plane she is flying.

On the way, their plane is attacked by the supervillain, but, the mother and two children survive the ruthless attack and safely arrive on the island. Elastigirl continues her journey to the place where her husband is being held and leaves behind the children to fend for themselves from the enemies. Let's take a look at the third clip and see what she says to Violet before she leaves. [Show clip #3]

"If the time comes, you will know what to do. It's in your blood!" Elastigirl was telling her daughter that her identity as a superhero is in her DNA. She is born with the superpowers of a superhero. Finally, when their lives depended on it, the mother was telling her children to own the truth about their identities and capabilities. She used to ask her husband and children to forget about who they were and live like everyone else, as normal people. But, the truth about the Parr family is that it is unnatural for them to try to live like everyone else. Because that is not who they are. What is natural for them is to live as superheroes, using the unique superpowers they have been gifted with at birth.

In today's scripture reading, the apostle Paul talks about the spiritual gifts of Christians, special gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit: paraphrasing his words, they are the gift of healing; the gift of preaching; the gift of teaching; the gift of discernment. Of course, there are many more gifts, like the gift of encouragement and

the gift of generosity. The apostle says though these spiritual gifts are different, they all come from the same spirit and serve the same purpose of bringing common good for all.

Each of us as Christians believers is equipped with special gifts, special powers to use to help and serve others. And the world needs our gifts. The world desperately needs our gifts and powers to bring about forgiveness, healing, restoration, and transformation. And, the truth is, we also need to use our spiritual gifts. Because we are truly happy and truly fulfilled when we are using these gifts that God has given to each and every one of us to make a difference in the world.

Mr. Incredible gets himself into trouble when he goes alone, believing he can do it all by himself. His wife confronts him about it, and he confesses, "I can't lose you. I'm not strong enough." What he discovers is that he is so much stronger and more powerful when he is joined by his family and his burden of saving the world is shared with them. He learns what makes him truly incredible is not his own superpowers and gifts, but his family. Mr. Incredible goes to a secret island to rediscover his true identity, to renew his strength, to use his gifts. But, he realizes that they are already there in the midst of his seemingly boring and meaningless life.

Like ours, the world of The Incredibles is never short of troubles. After Syndrome, the supervillain has been defeated, another supervillain appears. But, this is no problem because the members of the Parr family no longer shy away from their identity as superheroes. Let's take a look at the final clip. [Show clip #4]